Running Head: Rationale and Analysis of Final Project

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project: Reflective Practice for ESL Educators

Paula Poodwan, Jonathan Lai, Marie-France Hétu

Submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for

ETEC 510 – 66B

Design of Technology – Supported Learning Environments

Master of Educational Technology

External Programs and Learning Technologies

University of British Columbia, B. C.

Instructor Diane Janes

July 31, 2011

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project: Reflective Practice for ESL Educators

Part I

Key Frameworks

The focus of our design project was to create a six-module course to guide and help ESL educators reflect on their classroom teaching. The goals of this learning project were designed to enable ESL educators engage in a continuous cycle of self-observation and self-evaluation in order to understand their own actions, and the reactions they prompt in themselves and in learners. (Brookfield, 1995; Thiel, 1999) The project was designed to instruct and empower participants to use the concept of journaling as a tool, not necessarily to address a specific problem or question defined at the outset as in practitioner research, but to observe and refine practice in general on an ongoing basis.

Overview of Course and Framing of Primary Activities

We decided the project should offer a platform with various tools where participants are accompanied along the journaling process, and encouraged to share their reflective experiences. The platform, hosted on Moodle, offers links to blogs, synchronous and asynchronous discussion forums and voice tools. The course offers six modules, each of which offer examples and readings providing participants with guidance on how to hone their reflection skills. Journaling is first introduced, based on their own reflective process and Florez's (2001) perspective on reflection, and then participants are encouraged, through a series of lessons and interactivities, to collect data, reflect on their journaling, and further develop their reflective skills. The six modules are further detailed in Part IV, where the reflective process and academic scholarship, as well as the rationale behind chosen readings and interactivities, are outlined.

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project
Relevance of Literature in Designing Project

Theoretical insights and perspectives for this design project platform are based in part on John Dewey's (1930) principles (as cited in Stanley, 1998), who defined reflection as a proactive, ongoing examination of beliefs and practices, their origins and their impacts. The project is also built around a transformational approach, based on Mezirow's (2000) initial theory (as cited in Merriam and Caffarella, 2001). Furthermore, our project fosters experiential content, the integration of concepts, as well as the development of critical thinking skills while encouraging personal growth, as supported by Wang and Sarbo (2004), Torosyan (2001), Cranton (2002) and Baumgartner (2001).

This project is also based on various literature supporting journaling: Hubbs & Brand (2005) guided our understanding about how journaling helps reflect on one's practice; while Boud (2001) helped us determine how journaling can enhance teaching practices; while Fenwick (2001) provided guidance concerning how peers and facilitators should respond to journaling, helping us design our peer interactive activities accordingly. We also based our design on literature that examines the more challenging aspects of reflective practice. Following Fenwick's (2001) recommendations, we considered that responding to a journal accordingly carries high responsibility, therefore we created a safe environment for the "sharing" of journaling so feedback could be given with respect and sensitivity. When creating the course we also took into consideration that some practitioners might be reticent in facing changes, thus we planned to offer various degrees and ways of sharing their journaling experience through different activities that also respect learning style. (Florez, 2001)

In designing this project we explored the role of journaling as a tool that can help ESL educators, and thus tried to support the specific learning environment of the teacher as a reflective and instructional decision maker. (Carrasquillo & Feng, 1994; Schon, 1987; and Silva,

2003) We designed activities that provided ways to guide practitioners to examine the choices

they make and reflect beyond the data collected. (Gebhard,1996) Since this project is presented

as a way to attain professional development, it was important to create a professional and

feasible development activity, especially since researchers, such as Lamprianou and Boyle

(2005), support the idea of research inquiry as a professional and effective development activity.

In order to best support the online aspect of this project, many theoretical insights and

perspectives framed our thinking, particularly concerning the group of learners targeted. Thus we

created many Web-based discussions and online journaling based on Orem (2001), who supports

the idea that journaling can be beneficial for ESL educators, who often feel isolated in their

practice. As suggested by Elias (2010), the Moodle environment was in part chosen, because of

its easy accessibility, making this 'anywhere - anytime' learning platform convenient to most

participants. A safe and trusting learning environment and activities were created based on

Cranton & Wright's (2008) principles, so participants could freely reflect their thoughts and

experiences. We also tried to take into consideration the many factors that could adversely affect

participants' self-confidence, thus we planned scaffolding activities to allow students to get

beyond their proximal zone when ready. (Rakap, 2010)

Theoretical Insights and Perspectives with Adult ESL Educators

Since the participants targeted in this project are adult educators of ESL originating from

various environments, the theoretical insights that guide this project focus on Constructivism and

the Social learning Theory, based on Humanism. As a result, affordances were created to reflect

the idea that participants will have various levels of computer skills, and various degrees of

previous knowledge and experience with journaling. Module designing took into account learner

characteristics, including interests, level of experience, and the need for integrating reflection

within their teaching practice. From the start participants were encouraged to share their previous

experience and interests with their peers through forums; while participants were also asked to fill-in a survey concerning their level of expertise with technology and previous experience with journaling. This type of information will likely prove valuable in the long run and help us (the designers) adjust the course accordingly. Following the ADDIE model (analyze, design, develop, implement, evaluate), assured us the necessary flexibility to adjust as needed along the way.

Part II

Intentions and Positions

By means of this design we intended to help participants take part in an online professional development program. As a growing body of professionals, teachers have the onus to educate themselves on current practices and strategies. One means to accomplish this responsibility is to attend conferences, workshops, and professional development activities; however, the cost of travel and time commitment required to participate in these activities are not always viable or convenient. This design project is a result of the need to provide teachers, especially those with limited opportunities, to attend professional development programs, as well as an opportunity to attend a course directed at refining their classroom teaching. At the same time participants are likely to further develop their online technology skills.

Professional development programs allow individuals to improve their practice through self-directed activities and through collective interaction, which can be described as a process for personal growth. Although there are several discrepancies of what constitutes "effective" professional development (Guskey, 2003), "coaching" and "research inquiry" were found to be the most effective professional development activities. (Boyle et al., 2005) The same research indicates that on-going and long-term professional development also leads to the implementation of suggested practices. (Boyle et al., 2005)

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project

One practice supported by several educators (Florez, 2001) as well as many theorists (Hubbs & Brand, 2005; Fenwick, 2001), is the concept of reflective practice. When designing this project, we also took into consideration the challenges of journaling, for this practice requires an on-going and consistent commitment to record, analyze, compare and experiment with various strategies based on insights gained; however, we also recognized the many benefits possible when participants are properly instructed and trained in the art of reflection.

The advantages of implementing reflective practice are often immediate and adaptable to the diverse needs of instructors and their classes; nevertheless, we considered the idea that there remain areas of reflective practice that are more challenging. For example, journaling requires a commitment for continuous self-development and the time to achieve it. This issue is addressed in module 6 where participants are guided to recognize and reflect on their challenges and how they could overcome them. We were conscious that although practitioners can greatly benefit from a professional development program in the art of reflection, they need the necessary time to experiment with reflective practice in order to master the general process, and thus as designers, we needed to recognize that this course serves merely as an introduction to reflective practice. In our interactivity design we provided for lots of flexibility since journaling may also prove emotionally challenging for some practitioners who may not be ready to confront the uncertainty about their teaching philosophies and competence. (Florez, 2001) Facilitator and peer feedback/participation was also carefully designed with guidelines to take into consideration that it is a privilege to read and respond to journaling effectively. (Fenwick, 2001)

Since we felt working in an online environment presents different challenges to participants, and thus possibly affect participants' learning experience, factors such as previous knowledge, computers skills, learning styles and self-confidence were considered when designing this learning project. (Rakap, 2010) Interactivities involving technology were

gradually introduced to give participants the training, practice, and support they need to give

them time to be comfortable with technology use.

Rationale for Selected Technology

The predominant technology used in this design project is Moodle. The web address for

our site is http://moodle.met.ubc.ca/course/view.php?id=326

This learning platform is an open-source course management system (CMS) also known

as a virtual learning environment (VLE). Several factors made Moodle an ideal choice for this

project, including shared philosophy, easy accessibility, simplicity and flexibility of use.

As stated on their website Moodle.org, the concept and design of Moodle is based on a

constructivist philosophy. (Moodle, 2011) Five key principles govern its further development:

- We are all potential teachers as well as learners

- We learn well by creating and expressing for others

- We learn a lot by watching others

- Understanding others transforms us

- We learn well when the learning environment is flexible and adaptable to suit our needs

The aforementioned principles reflect the objectives and learning outcomes for participants as

they engage in the six modules.

Furthermore, Moodle's interface is simple to navigate and intuitive in nature. The

organization of the menu bars, tabs, buttons and links provide a shorter learning curve for both

beginner and experienced users of web-based technology. As the infrastructure continues to

improve, access to the Internet in remote parts of the world is becoming more accessible, which

we hope will allow practitioners from all over the world to take part in this learning activity. In

addition, since Internet users in more developed areas continue to grow each year (Internet

World Stats, 2011), this means more teachers can have access to this type of online learning

project. Inadvertently, these two facts will lead to continued growth, demand, and availability for

such dynamic and inexpensive websites as Moodle, confirming the chosen learning platform is a

viable choice.

Moreover, according to the 43,182,766 registered users in 211 countries, 1,118,416 are

teachers. (Moodle, 2011) Using an existing platform to host and develop a design project such as

this one is beneficial when there is already a sizable and established support network. The instant

access, and "anywhere, anytime" availability of Moodle makes it convenient for participants in

diverse areas, in different time zones, as well as with different schedules. (Elias, 2010) Other

features in development and ones currently available in Moodle, such as a mobile interface and

offline resources, add to its accessibility.

There are many features in Moodle that are flexible and adaptive. Learning can become

more personal and meaningful through simple customizations, which means we designed the

font size, colour scheme and visuals to reflect a humanistic and transformative approach to

learning. Since Moodle offers different tools, we were able to insert links and graphics to aid

participants with different learning styles.

When designing our project, we combined the flexibility of Moodle with other technologies such

as Skype and Voki. Graphics were used to identify activities, discussion forums, and links to

readings were readily available.

Finally, this project integrated several standard technical aspects that helped to minimize

user error and reduce frustration by users, such as: the ability to edit after posting; the possibility

to use confirmation messages when sending files; warning messages before leaving the course

site; and the option to resume at a previous session. Many simple elements of web design, which

are often taken for granted, will continue to be added, modified or improved to create a more

positive experience for all users, making Moodle the best overall learning environment to host

this type of project.

Part III

Key Concepts and Contexts

Our belief that ESL educators should reflect on their practices, stems from the role of the

teacher as a reflective and instructional decision maker – a domain that has evolved since the

1980's. (Carrasquillo and Feng,1994) The concept of our design project is to provide a platform

that encourages ESL educators to engage and practice self-observation and self-evaluation.

Activities have been designed to guide participants in developing the necessary critical thinking

skills to examine their teaching practices by linking past, present and future experiences.

Interactive activities have also been created knowing that ESL educators share a number

of characteristics: they are expected to be competent in the language taught; they are also

expected to develop and maintain skills relevant to teaching, making instant decisions while

facing classroom challenges and supporting learning with students. As such, we concluded

reflective practice could prove to be a valuable tool with which ESL educators can improve their

teaching. We believe that by journaling their teaching experiences, ESL educators can move

beyond the development of students' grammatical English proficiency, to a broader perspective

of teaching as a creative problem-solving endeavor (Schon, 1987).

The context of our design project is based on Constructivism and Social Learning,

whereby ESL educators are encouraged to become aware of their own classroom teaching, as

well as reflect upon their current and past knowledge and experiences, which will likely generate

new ideas and practice. This project provides various opportunities to get and provide feedback

from peers, colleagues and facilitators. It also provides a sense of support and at the same time a

challenge, as the participant may envision conceptual changes to his or her practice. Jonassen

(1999) reinforces this idea, when stating that Constructivist conceptions of learning assume that knowledge is individually constructed and socially constructed by learners, based on their interpretations of experiences in the world.

Since our learning environment context is offered from an online platform in Moodle, we had to pay particular attention to supporting a learning community where participants are able to interact freely in a trusting environment. Furthermore, Moodle is used as a platform that allows participants to connect to various resources, as well as participate in active discussions with their peers on current issues in learning and teaching English, while guiding participants in their reflective process.

Part IV

Reflective Process and Academic Scholarships

Our module activities are based on the use of interactive, computer-based technology. The reasoning for this design was to allow ESL educators to have the opportunity to engage with each other in various forms of Web-based discussions and through online journaling. As Orem (2001) explains, this type of sharing activity can offset physical isolation often felt by ESL educators, an element in this project that satisfies a socio-cultural need. Since Silva (2003) also supports this idea by affirming that journaling is a powerful method for documenting and learning from one's experience, we believe that reflective feedback can become a powerful tool for self-reflection. We determined that we needed to create a "learning community", thus course objectives needed to concentrate on providing various forms of communication platforms and forums where facilitators, participants and peers felt comfortable, and looked forward to communicating with each other. Furthermore, we determined course objectives needed to be based on scaffolding, where learning could be built from lesson to lesson and module to module. Each lesson needed to be well supported by readings and examples that could provide the

necessary guidance to start a journal, and also provide activities that would continue to motivate participants to develop their reflection skills. Chronological course objectives were created and clearly laid out within a six-module course, and activities within each lesson were designed to provide students with a good balance of information, through readings and examples; guidance and feedback, offered by peers and the facilitator; and practice, through individual or group interactivities, to allow participants to be fully engaged and motivated.

Many interactivities were designed to make the participant think about the consequences behind their teaching actions or methods. (Grandall, 2000; Gebhard, 1996; Stanley, 1998) Participants were provided with interactivities that encouraged them to examine alternatives to the choices they make, as well as reflect on the beliefs behind them. (Stanley, 1998) Creating interactivities that offer the possibility to communicate through blogs, forums and various interactivities helped participants consider how other practitioners address similar situations, generating alternatives and asking "what if" questions, thus pushing practitioners to broaden their reflection beyond the data they have collected. (Gebhard, 1996)

Rationale for Interactivity Design and Choice of Readings

Module 1

Course Objectives: <u>Week 1</u> - Participants will meet their peers, be introduced to journaling and their online learning environment. <u>Week 2</u> - Explore the purpose and concept of journal writing related to their practice.

Even before having participants begin the course activities, we felt it was important for them to be aware of their previous knowledge with technology and journaling. From the start, we designed an ice-breaker activity that would help build the learning community, as well as one that would allow each participant to determine what they hoped to achieve through this course.

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project

Considering our audience, ELS practitioners, we chose readings by Florez, (2001) and Lakshmi (2009) to introduce the concept of journaling as teachers, and to help participants explore the idea of journaling to reflect and improve one's teaching, as well as consider the advantages and challenges, (Orem, 2001). This module also guided and encouraged participants to carry out their own reasearch concerning journaling and the possibility to share their findings and thoughts with peers.

Module 2

    Course Objectives: Provide guidance in the first step of the reflective process: collecting descriptive data through classroom observation.

    This module was designed to guide participants in collecting written data through a class observation (Brookfield,1995), as well as provide the necessary information to allow them to realize how important journaling can be in improving their teaching practice. (Orem, 2001). Participants are reminded that there is no set formula or format to write reflective journals, thus to focus on their experience, write what they observe, and start reflecting about what is happening as they write thoughts down. (Moon, 2003) For this purpose, we provided a series of questions that guide their journaling - data that will be further categorized and analyzed in module 3.

Module 3

    Course Objectives: Analyze collected data with the help of peers and guidance from the facilitator, in terms of attitudes, assumption, beliefs, goals, power relation, and consequences they reveal.

    This module was designed to help participants analyze their descriptive journal segment, and further guide them in how to move from comparative journaling to critical journaling. A series of interactivities between peers and the facilitator was created to encourage participants to

share their experience and comment on their peers'. In order to understand how to reflect and

improve their jounaling, participants were asked to peruse the reading by Josh Boyd and Steve

Boyd (2010); while participants were also provided with examples of critical journaling (Porto,

2008) to allow them to see the progression between descriptive, comparative and critical

journaling. Visual aids, such as charts, by Hubbs & Brand (2008) were provided so participants

could use them as guidelines to categorize their journaling observations.

Module 4

      Course Objectives: Reflect on how the situation could have been different using

different synchronous communication tools.

      This module was designed to encourage participants to select and describe a situation or

journaling excerpt from a previous module, and reflect on how things could be done differently if

faced with the same situation again. Two synchronous chat rooms were created to provide

students with private and convenient areas to discuss. In order for participants to familiarize

themselves with this form of communicating, participants were asked to read, Spencer and Hiltz,

(2003). Considering it may also be the first time participants use "Skype" as a form of

communicating, detailed instructions were included on how to use Skype, and participants were

guided by Chen's (2009) reading concerning this form of online synchronous discussion when

used as a web-based professional development tool for teachers.

Module 5

      Objectives: The exploration of blogging and other online platforms, as a means of

extended journaling.

      In designing this module, we needed to consider the possibility that participants may not

have had the opportunity to blog before, therefore a step by step introduction to blogging with

examples (Lee, 2010) was provided, as well as asking participants to read Kelleavy & Moloney

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project

(2010) to provide them with a good introduction to the advantages and challenges of reflecting within a social space. For this module we chose the blogging service most commonly used in higher education:

Blogger: http://www.blogger.com/ also offering other blogging site possibilities, such as Edublogs: http://edublogs.org/ and WordPress: http://wordpress.com. We felt this was a good module to introduce tagging and social bookmarking by encouraging participants to create a Delicious: http://www.delicious.com and Tumblr: http://www.tumblr.com sites for the sharing of resources and pertinent websites between ESL educators. We felt it might also be interesting to include a "fun" alternative to communicating their journaling experiences through "Voki", for which we provided the necessary explanations and links.

Module 6

Objectives: Week 1 **-** Reflect on your experience by creating a journaling synthesis that incorporates new insights. Week 2 - Decide on a mode of delivery and present your journaling synthesis via a text, voice, pictorial or mixed form of presentation.

Participants were first asked to think about reflecting challenges outlined in Otieno, (2009) such as lack of time and support from the administration, in order to become conscious of their own journaling challenges and start thinking how they can overcome them. In order to form a synthesis of their learning, participants were then asked to read examples of journaling syntheses (Boden, Cook, Lasker-Scott, Moore & Shelton, 2007), and then encouraged to create a plan that incorporates new insights, making note of all changes, big or small, as these can equally have an impact on teaching and learning (Gebhard, 1996). Using their previous exploration and learning from module 4 and 5, as well as their journaling notes from modules 2 and 3, participants were then encouraged to present their learning synthesis to their peers using a method of choice.

Course Synthesis

In order to encourage participants to keep journaling beyond this six-module course, we felt it would be a good idea to propose further reading on the art of reflection, as well as a "quick list of sites" for Skype, Delicious, Tumblr, Voki, Blogs etc., in the hope it would help participants remain motivated and continue their journaling. Readings such as (Farrell, 2006) suggests a multitude of ways to journal that ESL teachers could try until they find the one that works for them; while Hiemstra, (2001) provides good examples of successful ESL student journaling, should the ESL practitioner wish to embark on this new learning journey; and Powell (2005), provides an introduction to "video" journaling.

Since we decided participants would not be "graded" nor that facilitators would assess course participation, we designed a self-evaluation survey so participants could reflect on their own learning and participation. In order to allow us to improve our design and learning environment, we also designed a course participation survey, so we could adjust accordingly following feedback from participants.

Part V

Verifications

Anderson (2008) believes it is important to assess designs to see if it allows participants to accomplish the goals that were laid out. When designing our educational project, we reflected on the quality of our design, essentially basing ourselves on the following environment lenses: student-, knowledge-, assessment-, and community-centered; as well as Bate and Poole's (2004) epistemology of technology as a learning tool.

Learner-Centered Environment

It was important to consider what learners bring to the learning context, and as such we designed a short survey to evaluate prior knowledge and skills with technology and reflection. (Anderson,

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project

2008; Bate and Poole, 2004) We also provided a forum where participants and facilitators could introduce themselves to help bridge the "online" gap. This forum, as Anderson (2008) suggests, encourages students to share unique aspects of themselves, thus contributing to create a safe and welcoming learning environment. A variety of activities were offered using text and visuals, including social interactive activities, in and out of the Moodle site, to best meet learner needs; encouraging participants to participate in as many activities as possible. (Bates and Poole, 2004).

Knowledge-Centered Environment

Since our project focused on honing reflecting skills and targeted participants that are teachers, it was easy to relate to Anderson's (2008) idea that not only students, but also teachers need opportunities to reflect upon their own thinking. The course is designed so participants are guided beyond the automacy of learning a subject. (Bate and Pool, 2004) Participants first learn about the art of reflection, and then go about acquiring reflection skills. The course was designed to guide participants in analyzing a real situation, and then applying this knowledge to new contexts. As Bate and Pool (2004) suggest, we have allowed for multiple interpretations, so students can draw on their knowledge and that of others.

Assessment-Centered

Given the nature of our design project, we felt participants should rate their own participation in these areas: discussion activities throughout the course, individual and group assignments, reflection entries, as well as provide peer feedback. In addition, a questionnaire was designed so participants could evaluate their overall learning experience. In this manner feedback from participants would also allow teachers/ facilitators to evaluate if and how participants have accomplished learning objectives. The design was flexible, allowing designers and facilitators to reflect on design and teaching, making modifications as needed. (Bates and Pool, 2004)

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project
Community-Centered

Our learning design was based on Vygotsky's (2000) "social cognition", as participants were encouraged to work together collaboratively to create new knowledge. It was also based on Wenger's (2002) idea of a learning community that supports and challenges each other, which again leads to knowledge construction. This reinforces the idea that it was important to build a learning environment with a shared sense of belonging, trust and commitment to participate, by providing activities/catalysts that allow this to happen, and guiding/encouraging participants to take part in them.

Part VI

Group Reflection

Our group decided to design an educational online project delivered through Moodle. Since we used a Web 2.0 construct we felt we needed to maximize the available tools, remembering that in the end we were trying to nurture collective learning. We believed we needed to pay particular attention to the social design features and use them wisely, since this type of project enabled us to design various interactivities among participants, peers and facilitators.

The Moodle environment also allowed our group to plan an ongoing collaboration, where we could design, edit, and revise work already completed by group members. The participants targeted in this project were adult educators of ESL, originating from various backgrounds. Therefore, we made sure the technological tools we selected to use in the modules were appropriate for the diverse experiences, technological proficiency and previous knowledge of the participants. In addition, we ensured that the tools were user friendly and would provide more advanced users further opportunities for incorporation and exploration.

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project

We believed interactivities should offer a combination of collaborative activities such as: synchronous text and voice chats, asynchronous discussion board forums, exploration of a wiki and blog space, with the idea of promoting a well-rounded exploration of reflective teaching and learning. Our project essentially focused on promoting collaborative, peer-to peer, interactive, user generated content through asynchronous, written reflections; with some journaling through synchronous text and voice activities through Skype.

Our first group collaboration began on Vista, using the internal e-mail system. Soon after, we replaced this mode of communication within a private space in Vista. We also tried a "Google space" and although it was convenient, because of its easy asynchronous access, we found it difficult to keep track of comments and changes, and some of us were frustrated with the slow typing process. The ability to actually communicate by voice through Skype allowed a greater cohesiveness among group members, but having to work with our schedules and different time zones made it a challenge to use this mode of communication frequently. In the end, the Vista private space worked out best, as it gave us plenty of time to communicate asynchronously.

Individual Reflection

Paula Poodwan

Our project has been a design project that truly combined theory and practice. I was exposed to several topics covered in ETEC 510, for example the construction of affordances; constructivism by design, Web 2.0, social networking, knowledge-building, and a framework for selecting and using technology. Since I worked within a small group and with team members who are very understanding, I felt secure expressing my ideas; and when opinions differed, I had no hesitation discussing different points of view. It was also interesting to collaborate and scaffold my own learning with individuals from very different professional backgrounds. We each brought our own unique experiences to the design project, offered input, considered

different viewpoints, and constructed new knowledge together. Discussion through questions and

posting in the forum from a member of the group has encouraged me to engage in deep thinking

of the topics discussed. This has been a productive and successful collaboration and I feel

confident in using what I have learned to work within a group to design a course, and to design

other online courses for my ESL students in Thailand.

Marie-France Hetu

For me, this project was a great way to make meaning of my learning in ETEC 510.

Furthermore, I found myself making connections with learning from my previous ETEC 500

course, namely for researching and making up surveys. I also used my journaling experience, as

well as based my designing approach on my teaching and learning philosophies acquired during

my previous ADED courses with Brock University. Before starting this course, I knew little

about creating "Moodle" learning spaces or the principles that govern affordances when

designing an online learning project, and found the learning curve steep. However, group

members' expertise in these domains was absolutely vital in helping me learn the multiple steps

required when designing this type of project. I felt regular communication between members was

key to building our design project, from posting ideas to collaborative content writing, and then

the actual building and completion of the Moodle site. Group reflections on course readings also

helped me integrate how to build a learning environment (Anderson, 2008), and support a

learning community (Bates & Pool, 2004). Further reflection brought numerous questions

concerning the creation of a Knowledge-building community so our project moved beyond the

delivery of curriculum. As we worked collaboratively on the project, it became clear that this

six-week course needed to be based on a socio-cultural constructivist approach, and our design

built in terms of mediated action – two key teachings in ETEC 510.

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project

As the project neared completion, I felt proud and excited to be part of a team that designed an interactive online learning environment. I felt that our learning project was built on holistic principles, giving participants the opportunity to build a social and contextual relationship with peers through journaling. I believe we succeeded in creating an environment that encourages participants to build on past experience, hone their journaling skills while creating new perspectives within their teaching practice. This project required a lot of time, effort, and collaboration - but I feel it was the pinnacle of my learning in ETEC 510. I now feel confident I have acquired the basic skills for creating other online knowledge building communities in the future.

Jonathan Lai

I consider the final project a success in light of all the ongoing personal and family challenges I faced this semester. I am grateful to have worked on this project with two very patient and understanding individuals. Although some aspects of the project for which I was responsible for were not quite to the quality of which I expect of myself, the support I received from my group members was truly noteworthy. It was a very valuable learning experience to review different learning theories and practices during this course, especially reflective practice, which I was able to apply when helping to plan, design and construct the modules. Having less than one years' worth of experience in teaching ESL, it was beneficial for me to draw from my group members' extensive knowledge and experience as ESL educators; this was the type of collaborative experience we hope will (hypothetically) occur with our project design. Although the construction of both the Wiki and Moodle sites was new to me, I quickly developed an aptitude with constructing and navigating through these online platforms (despite the sometimes tedious task of editing and formatting everything exactly the way I feel it should be.) While

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project

reviewing and constructing the modules on Moodle, it was important that I too go through the

process of the assignments, and note reflectively what I was asking others to do. I know that all

these assignments, projects and experiences we were all engaged in will better assist me in future

teaching opportunities whether they be online, in an ESL setting or in the classroom. Overall, I

know that this project is something we can all be proud of.

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project

References

Anderson, T. (2008). Towards and Theory of Online Learning. Anderson. In T. & Elloumi, F.

  Theory and Practice of Online Learning. Athabasca University.

Bates and Poole. (2003). A Framework for Selecting and Using Technology. *Effective Teaching*

  with Technology, (75-105). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Baumgartner, L. M. (2001). An update on transformational learning. *New Directions for Adult*

  and Continuing Education, 89, 15-25.

Boden, C. J., Cook, D., Lasker-Scott, T., Moore, S. & Shelton, D. (2007). Five perspectives on

  reflective journaling. Adult Learning, 17(4), 11-15.

Boud, D. (2001). Using journal writing to enhance reflective practice. In L. M. English & M. A.

  Gillen (Eds.), *Promoting Journal Writing in Adult Education: New Directions for Adult*

  and Continuing Education, 90, 9-17.

Boyd, J. & Boyd S. (2010). Reflect and improve: Instructional development through a teaching

  journal. College Teaching 53(3), 110-114.

Boyle, B., Lamprianou, I. & Boyle, T. (2005). A longitudinal study of teacher change: What

  makes professional development effective? Report of the second year of the study.

  School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 16(1), 1-27.

Brookfield, S. (1995). Becoming a critically reflective teacher. San Francisco Jossey- Bass.

Carrasquillo, A. & Feng, S. (1994). A Reflection on Reflective Practice in Teaching English to

  Speakers of Other Languages. (ED374668).

Chen, Y. S., Chen, N. S. & Tsai, C. C. (2009). The use of online synchronous discussion for

  web-based professional development for teachers. Computers & Education, 53(4), 1155-

  1166.

Crandall, J. (2000). Language teacher education. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *20*, 34-55.

Cranton, P. (2002). Teaching for transformation. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education, 93*, Wiley Periodicals inc.

Cranton, P. & Wright, B. (2008). The transformative educator as learning companion. *Journal of Transformative Education, 6*(1), 33-47.

Elias, T. (2010). Universal instructional design principles for moodle. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 11*(2), 110-124.

Farrell, T. S. C. (2006). Reflective practice in action: A case study of a writing teacher's reflections on practice. TESL Canada Journal, 23(2), 77-90.

Fenwick, T. (2001). Responding to journals in a learning process. *Promoting Journal Writing in Adult Education: New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 90,* 37-47.

Florez, M. C. (2001). Reflective teaching practice in adult ESL settings. *National Center for ESL Literacy Education.* Retrieved from http://www.literacyminnesota.org/sites/6bc90f8a-e528-403a-8c6b-ffdd2e3dd3a7/uploads/Reflective_Teaching.pdf

Gebhard, J. G. (1996). Teaching English as a foreign or second language. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Guskey, T. R. (2003). What makes professional development effective? *Phi Delta Kappan, 84*(10), 748-750.

Hiemstra, R. (2001), Uses and benefits of journal writing. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 90, 19–26.

Hubbs, D. L. & Brand, C. F. (2005). The paper mirror: understanding reflective journaling. *Journal of Experiential Education, 28(1), 60-71.*

Internet World Stats (2011). Usage and population statistics. Retrieved from

http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

Jonassen, D. (1999). Designing constructivist learning environments. In C. Reigeluth (Ed.),

Instructional design theories and models: Volume II. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Killeavy, M. & Anne Moloney, A. (2010). Reflection in a social space: Can blogging support

reflective practice for beginning teachers? Teaching and Teacher Education, 26(4), 1070-

1076.

Lakshmi, D. S. (2009). Journal writing: A means of professional development in ESL classroom

at under graduate level. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 5*(2).

Lee, O. (2010). Facilitating preservice teachers' reflection through interactive online journal.

Physical Educator, 67(3), 128-139.

Merriam, S. B., & Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A

comprehensive guide.* (3rd ed.) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, B. (2010). Brookfield's four lenses: Becoming a critically reflective teacher. Retrieved

from

http://sydney.edu.au/arts/teaching_learning/academic_support/Brookfield_summary.pdf

Moodle (2011). About moodle. Retrieved from http://docs.moodle.org/20/en/Main_Page

Moon, J. (2003). Learning journals and logs, reflective diaries. *Centre for Teaching and

Learning: Good Practice in Teaching and Learning.* Retrieved from

http://www.deakin.edu.au/itl/assets/resources/pd/tl-modules/teaching-approach/group-

assignments/learning-journals.pdf

Moore, J. L., Dickson-Deane, C. & Galyen, K. (2011). E-learning, online learning, and distance

learning environments: Are they the same? *Internet and Higher Education, 14*(2), 129-

135.

Rationale and Analysis of Final Project

Orem, R. A. (2001). Journal writing in adult ESL: Improving practice through reflective

writing. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 90,* 69-77. (EJ630512).

Otienoh, R. O. (2009). Reflective practice: The challenge of journal writing. Reflective Practice,

10(4), 477–489.

Porto, M. (2008). Ateaching narrative: My growth as a foreign language educator through

teaching diaries. Journal of Further and Higher Education, 32(30), 185-206.

Powell, E. (2005). Conceptualising and facilitating active learning: teachers' video-stimulated

reflective dialogues. Reflective Practice, 6(3), 407-418.

Rakap, S. (2010). Impacts of learning styles and computer skills on adult students' learning

online. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 9*(2), 108-115.

Schon, D. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching   and

learning in the profession. San Francisco, CA: A Jossey-Bass.

Silva, D.Y. (2003). Triad Journaling ; A tool for creating professional learning

communities. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 30*(4), 69-82.

Spencer, D. H. & Hiltz, S. R. (2003). A field study of use of synchronous chat in online courses.

Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (pp. 10 -20). Washington, DC:

IEEE Computer Society.

Stanley, C. (1998). A framework for teacher reflectivity. *TESOL Quarterly, 32*(3), 584-591.

Thiel, T. (1999). Reflections on critical incidents. *Prospect*, *14*(1), 44-52.

Torosyan, R. (2001). Motivating students: evoking transformative learning and growth.

Etc., *58*(3), 311-28.

Wang, V.C. X., Sarbo, L. (2004). Philosophy, role of adult educators and learning how

contextually adapted philosophies & situational role of adult educators affect learners

transformation and emancipation. *Journal of Transformative Education 2*(3), 204-214.